

**Suffolk County Water Authority**

**Interoffice Memorandum**

**To:** ALL EMPLOYEES  
**From:** Jeff Szabo, Chief Executive Officer  
**Re:** COVID-19 Response Plan - Phase II Office Return Plan  
**Date:** June 17, 2020

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SCWA responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by significantly modifying its work practices, allowing employees to work remotely, staggering shifts, preventing employees from congregating, shifting work stations to create social distance between employees, disinfecting shared surfaces, curtailing public access to its facilities and limiting non-emergency services. As essential employees, all SCWA employees are expected to return to their workstation unless they qualify for telework under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), as a Worker at High Risk due to age or a qualifying underlying medical condition or are providing substantial care to a High Risk individual. Phase II of SCWA's COVID-19 Response Plan governs their return.

On May 21, 2020 SCWA adopted Phase I of its COVID-19 Response Plan. Under Phase I, SCWA instituted structural changes needed to create a workplace that conforms to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations. Phase II allows employees to return, in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework, to their changed workplace. By necessity, Phase II builds on the measures implemented in the immediate response to the COVID pandemic and identifies those practices that will be continued throughout the phase. These are fluid and can - and likely will - be modified as conditions change. SCWA, through the Phases of its COVID Response Plan, is building layer upon layer of best practices to create and maintain a safe working environment.

As in the SCWA response throughout Phase I, in Phase II SCWA relies on the tensile strength of its employees to inform its response. Our employees' adaptability and professionalism allowed SCWA to weather the COVID crisis without an interruption in service to our customers and more importantly without a loss of life among SCWA staff.

It is yet again a time to pivot, from remote work arrangements and minimalism, to a fully staffed and dynamic SCWA ready to respond to our customer's changing needs. Phase II begins the process.

## Suffolk County Water Authority

### Guidance – COVID-19 Response Plan - Phase II – Office Return Plan

- Components of Phase II Protocol:
- I. SCWA-Wide Protocols
  - II. Departmental Return to Work Protocols
  - III. Duration of Phase II

#### I. SCWA Wide Protocols

##### A. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Leave

Employees qualifying for FFCRA Leave will be permitted to work remotely in a manner consistent with the U.S. Department of Labor’s FFCRA Guidance. The Chief Human Resources Officer or her designee will determine an employee’s eligibility for a FFCRA leave based on the documentation submitted by the employee. The employee shall cooperate in providing materials to CHRO as requested. FFCRA determination appeals shall be to the Chief Executive Officer. SCWA may cancel an employee’s remote work arrangement under FFCRA leave if it determines that the employee is unable to work remotely successfully. If cancelled, the employee may apply for a FFCRA leave but not work remotely. If approved the employee will receive a prorated salary as provided under FFCRA.

##### B. High Risk Employees

Employees at a High Risk for severe illness, as defined under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Interim Guidance For Employers with Workers at High Risk, will be permitted to work remotely in a manner consistent with the Guidance. The Chief Human Resources Officer or her designee will determine a High Risk Employee’s eligibility based on the documentation submitted by the employee. The employee shall cooperate in providing materials to CHRO as requested. High Risk Employee determinations may be appealed to the Chief Executive Officer. Information submitted by the employee will be maintained in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations. SCWA may cancel a High Risk employee’s remote work arrangement under FFCRA leave if it determines that the employee is unable to work remotely successfully. If cancelled, the employee may apply for a FFCRA leave but not work remotely. If approved the employee will receive a prorated salary as provided under FFCRA

##### C. Employees Providing Substantial Care for High Risk Individuals

Employees working remotely successfully and simultaneously providing substantial care for a High Risk Individual as defined under the FFCRA may continue to work remotely during Phase II. The Chief Human Resources Officer

or her designee will determine an employee's eligibility based on the documentation submitted by the employee. The employee shall cooperate in providing materials to CHRO as requested. Substantial care for High Risk Individuals determinations may be appealed to the Chief Executive Officer. Information submitted by the employee will be maintained in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations. SCWA may cancel an employee's accommodation at any time or for any reason.

D. Adoption and Incorporation of Phase I Protocols

The measures instituted under Phase II are additive and complementary to those implemented under Phase I. SCWA through its COVID Response Plan is building layer upon layer of best practices to create and maintain a safe working environment. The Office Return Team shall resolve conflicts between the two.

E. Remote Work

The CEO is authorized to permit remote work for the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Legal Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officers for Customer Service and Operations, Deputy CFO, General Counsel, Chief Engineer and Director of Research and Development, Directors of Communication, Construction Maintenance, Field Services, Information Technology, Laboratory, Production Control, Pine Barrens, Purchasing, Risk and Strategic Initiatives on a periodic and limited basis. Approvals of request will contain the remote work schedule. Employees approved for remote work must appropriately document the work performed remotely. Applications for remote work shall be submitted for the CEO's review and determination. Remote Work determinations are not appealable.

F. Remote Work Requirements

Employees approved to work remotely shall record their activities and submit the record to their supervisor weekly. A remote work agreement may be terminated by SCWA if an employee is not sufficiently productive or fails to adequately document their productive time.

G. Enhanced Flex Time

Enhanced Flex Time will be available to all management employees provided operational efficiency can be maintained. Enhanced Flex Time allows employees to alter their work schedule by reporting to work up to one and half (1.5) hours earlier, leaving work up to one and half (1.5) hours earlier and/or reducing their lunch break by thirty (30) minutes. Enhanced Flex Time may allow for childcare, family care or to reduce the number of employees entering or exiting a building at

the same time while Phase II is in effect. Requests for Enhanced Flex Time must be approved by the Executive in charge of the employee's department and the CHRO. Appropriate documentation must accompany each request.

H. SCWA Return to Work Date

By June 22, 2020, all SCWA employees will return to work full time, have a date certain for their return that allows required workplace modifications to be completed, or have an approved FFCRA leave or FFCRA remote work arrangement or an approved leave as a substantial care provider for a High Risk individual.

II. Departmental Return to Work Protocols

A. CEO

1. Communications

No changes required because implementation of Phase I protocols meet CDC guidelines.

2. Internal Audit

No changes required because implementation of Phase I protocols meet CDC guidelines.

3. Laboratory

a. Three Shifts – Lab staff has been divided into three shifts, 7 am to 3 pm, 8:30 am to 5 pm, and 3 pm to 11 pm, and this will continue. Scientists work the early and late shifts to allow for a head count reduction. A secondary benefit of this change is the increase in same day testing capacity. Management shifts begins at 7 am and overlap both the early and late scientist's shifts. Supervisors, Assistant Supervisors and Project Management, will continue to work on the early and late shifts to provide oversight and to troubleshoot problems, as necessary.

b. Sample collectors – No changes required because implementation of Phase I protocols meet CDC guidelines.

4. Safety

Safety's office has been relocated from the 4040 Sunrise Highway building to the Oakdale Administration building to enable members of the

Finance Department to work in the 4040 Building to increase social distancing within the Finance Department. Safety will prepare and distribute information and a video detailing how to properly employ personal protection equipment.

B. Customer Service

1. Customer Service

Call center staff temporarily relocated to the Hauppauge building will move back to the Coram campus. Call center staff will deploy in Building 1 and other areas of Building 5 of the Coram campus to provide head count reduction in Building 5 and to increase social distancing among staff in the call center.

No public access to either Building 1 or Building 5 will be allowed during Phase II without an appointment. SCWA will increase customer payment options and locations by leveraging Kubra's payment network to receive SCWA payments.

2. Field Operations

Technicians will continue to report directly to their vehicles. On June 15, SCWA will resume in-premises service calls. Employees entering a premise will be required to wear a SCWA-supplied face, appropriate to the level of risk and protective of both the employee and the public, covering in accordance with SCWA's written instruction. On the day of the service call, Customer Service will call the customer requesting the service and determine whether anyone in the premises is actively COVID sick. Technicians will document their time using Timeclock Plus on SCWA-issued devices.

Access limits to the storeroom instituted to prevent employee congregation will be maintained.

3. Meter Shop and Workforce Technology Operations

Meter Shop employees entering a premise will be required to wear a SCWA supplied face covering. Employees entering a premise will be required to wear a SCWA-supplied face, appropriate to the level of risk and protective of both the employee and the public, covering in accordance with SCWA's written instruction. On the day of the service call, Customer Service will call the customer requesting the service and

determine whether anyone in the premises is actively COVID sick. Meter Shop employees will document their time using Timeclock Plus on SCWA issued devices as directed by their supervisor.

Limits on the access to the storeroom instituted to prevent employee congregation will be maintained.

C. Finance

1. Finance

Members of Finance will be deployed to the 4040 Building to reduce head count and provide social distancing among staff in the Finance building in accordance with CDC recommendations.

2. Purchasing

Bid openings will continue to be closed to the public consistent with Executive Orders of the New York State Governor. Purchasing will explore providing remote video access to bid openings.

D. Human Resources

1. Facilities

No changes required because implementation of Phase I protocols meet CDC guidelines.

2. Human Resources

Remote office visits will remain paused until the end of Phase II. Appointments will continue to be required before an employee may meet with Human Resources staff to avoid the congregation of employees. Job postings and bidding shall continue remotely. Initial prospective employee interviews will be conducted using remote meeting technology. Candidates meriting a second interview will be interview in person. Tests shall be scheduled in locations providing for adequate social distancing between individuals taking a test.

3. Stores

Non-SCWA delivery personnel shall not be permitted access into SCWA Stores facilities. Portable toilets will remain available for non-SCWA personnel at the Oakdale, Westhampton and Bay Shore facilities for the

duration of Phase II. A rule limiting the number of members of a crew that may enter the Storerooms will remain in place throughout Phase II. Westhampton stores, using a shift change employee will continue to fill Construction Maintenance and Production Control supply orders before the CM and PC shifts start. Restrictions on intra-SCWA mail delivery which limit clerk access to SCWA buildings will remain in place throughout Phase II. Intra-SCWA mail and deliveries for each SCWA building will continue to be made to one central location in each building.

4. Transportation

Mechanics will continue to wear gloves while operating SCWA vehicles. Interior surfaces of vehicles operated by mechanics will be wiped and sanitized before and after the work.

E. Information Technology

1. Information Technology

IT will support and maintain remote work platforms and teleconference services. Instructions for each type of service utilized will be prepared and new technologies will be tested before they go live for a public meeting. Timeclock Plus functionalities allowing employees to clock in across different platforms will be deployed across the departments.

2. Geographic Information Systems

GIS, currently housed in the Construction Maintenance building, will relocate to Building 1 on the Coram campus to increase social distancing among staff and reduce head count within the Construction Maintenance building.

F. Legal

1. Legal

No changes required because implementation of Phase I protocols meet CDC guidelines.

2. Risk

Seating arrangement changes to increase social distancing will be implemented.

## G. Operations

### 1. Construction Maintenance

Crew members will continue to report directly to their SCWA vehicles to avoid employee congregation. Timeclock Plus capabilities will be expanded to allow crew members to clock in remotely at the discretion of their supervisors. Some CM supervisors in Oakdale will relocate their offices into leased construction trailers to increase social distance within the supervisor's office. Pipeline and paving inspectors were permitted under Phase I to stagger their work schedules to coincide with the contractors they were inspecting. This practice will continue. On June 15, Cross Connection Control inspections will resume. Employees entering a premise will be required to wear a SCWA-supplied face, appropriate to the level of risk and protective of both the employee and the public, covering in accordance with SCWA's written instruction. On the day of the service call, Cross Connection Control will call the customer requesting the service and determine whether anyone in the premises is actively COVID sick. Draftperson's workstations shall be rearranged to increase social distance. Portable signs will be provided to crews that instruct members of the public to maintain safe social distances from work crews.

### 2. Engineering

The Chief Engineer is authorized to allow staff to take a SCWA vehicle to their residence on the evening before a jobsite inspection and to use the vehicle the following workday or authorize an employee to report directly from home to a jobsite.

### 3. New Service

No changes required because implementation of Phase I protocols meet CDC guidelines.

### 4. Production Control

Alternative starting times for shifts for Field Operators implemented in Phase I will terminate on June 23 unless an employee has a FFCRA qualifying circumstance that requires maintain an alternative start time that is approved by CHRO and Director of Production Control . Supervisors may continue to report to jobsites using their SCWA vehicles. Field employees issued SCWA laptops will be permitted to clock in remotely using Timeclock Plus or by swipe card at the discretion of their



supervisor.

H. Pine Barrens

Commonly used facilities will be moved away from workstations to avoid congregation of employees and provide recommended social distancing between employees.

III. Phase II Duration

The CEO, in consultation with the Board, Senior Leadership Team and Office of Emergency Management, shall determine the duration of the Phase II protocols. The CEO is authorized to modify Phase II protocols as conditions require.

Modified practices established in this Guidance shall terminate upon the expiration of Phase II unless expressly extended by the CEO.